

APR 14 1941

Bulletín

OF THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

VOLUME XX • OCTOBER 1940 • NUMBER 1



VIRGIN AND CHILD ENTHRONED

BY LORENZO GHIBERTI, ITALIAN (FLORENCE), 1378-1455.

Recently acquired through the Ralph H. Booth Fund and published
in "The Art Quarterly," Spring, 1940.

Three Paintings by American Artists

M R. D. M. FERRY, JR., who has contributed many interesting items to our collection illustrating the background of American painting, has during the past year supplemented his numerous gifts with three paintings which are important in the development of our collection: two figure paintings by Winslow Homer and Eastman Johnson, and a landscape by Asher B. Durand.

GIRL AND LAUREL BY WINSLOW HOMER

The Winslow Homer, *Girl and Laurel*,¹ painted in 1879, is a presentation of the country themes Homer loved so much and essayed so successfully at this period of his career. During the decade from 1870 to 1880 he spent much of his time in the country where he found subjects for many of his most interesting genre pictures. In the countryside of New England, in the small villages of New York State, at the Houghton Farm, Mountainville, New York, and in the foot-hills of the Catskills not far from Woodstock, where a colony of noted contemporary American artists find an inspiring and compatible locale for their creative efforts, Homer found scenes to his liking, peopled with boys and girls, men and women, inured to the life of the soil. These are exemplified in his berry pickers, shepherdesses, schoolboys at play, picnickers, and other similar themes. There is a fine outdoor feeling in these rural portrayals. As in all his work, his impressions are keenly observed and set down with the utmost candor and naturalness. They reveal the poignant understanding of the healthy and normal activity of country life.

Such a picture is *Girl and Laurel*. It shows a country girl sturdily and fittingly costumed in plain dress with white apron and sunbonnet in a rocky landscape against a background of laurel in full bloom. In her hand she carries a wicker basket from which the freshly cut blooms are protruding. The picture is keyed in the outdoor light and color of summer.

It was not until 1884 that Homer settled at Prout's Neck, Maine. He then became absorbed in the heroic lives of seafaring people and in the marine subjects which have brought him high renown. But while these strong works of his

Published monthly, October to May inclusive, at the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Detroit, Michigan, under date of October 29, 1934. Subscription price \$1.00 per year.



GIRL AND LAUREL
BY
WINSLOW HOMER
AMERICAN
1836-1910.

Gift of D. M. Ferry, Jr.
1940

mature years, along with his water colors, have commanded paramount attention, there is now a growing interest and appreciation of his earlier works of which *Girl and Laurel* is a charming and outstanding example.

EASTMAN JOHNSON SELF PORTRAIT

With the present revival of interest in Eastman Johnson and its attendant appraisal of his works, brought about by recent exhibitions of his genre paintings in New York, and the more inclusive showing of his works at the Brooklyn Museum, it is a satisfaction to find this American artist represented in our permanent collection by two good examples of his painting which show different phases of his work. One of these, *In the Fields*, is a study of cranberry pickers and is a part of his Nantucket series done in the seventies. This was published

in the BULLETIN of October, 1938. The other, a small *Self Portrait*,² has just been acquired.

It will be remembered that Eastman Johnson at the age of twenty-five was already an accomplished draftsman and had had a marked success with portrait drawings of notable people before he departed for Europe for study in 1849. Two years of severe academic training at Düsseldorf were followed by a fruitful sojourn at The Hague, where he came under the influence of Rembrandt and other Dutch masters. This period added a broadening touch to the range of his artistic vision and upon his return to America in 1855 was a factor in saving him from the trivialities of his period.

The exhibition of his picture known as *My Old Kentucky Home* won him election to the National Academy of Design in 1860, and in conformity with custom he was asked to present to that body a portrait of himself. That portrait formed one of the interesting items of the recent Brooklyn exhibition and was used as a frontispiece in the catalogue. It is here again reproduced.

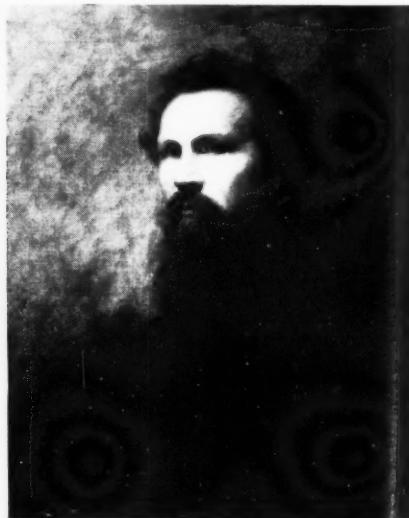


(ABOVE)
SELF PORTRAIT
BY EASTMAN JOHNSON
AMERICAN, 1824-1906.

Gift of D. M. Ferry, Jr., 1940

(BELOW)
SELF PORTRAIT
BY EASTMAN JOHNSON
AMERICAN, 1824-1906.

National Academy of Design, New York



While the pose is quite different from that of the Detroit portrait, there is a marked resemblance of the features, indicating that they were made at the same period, and the smaller picture quite conceivably may have been a first study. Eastman Johnson, with his abundant wavy black hair and full beard, was a handsome young blade of thirty-five when this picture was painted. The three-quarter length standing figure, draped in a dark cape with velvet collar that falls gracefully about him, is a picturesque reminder of his student years in Europe. Painted in a low key and with a very sensitive envelopment of light and dark, it clearly shows his indebtedness to the Rembrandt influence. Upon its completion this conception may have seemed to the artist a little too showy, for in the final bust portrait of more conventional type deposited with the Academy the dress and pose is considerably modified and restrained. The charm of this small portrait is in its kinship in style and feeling to the genre of his earlier years which has had much to do with the revival of interest in this artist.

As we summarize his accomplishments as revealed in recent exhibitions, we find that his genre pictures depicting American life make a sturdy contribution that at times parallels that of Homer or Eakins. It is a matter of regret that his later years, devoted almost exclusively to his career as a successful and fashionable portrait painter, should have interrupted his delightful and significant interpretations of American life.

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN, BERKSHIRES BY ASHER B. DURAND

The importance of Asher B. Durand in American painting lies in the fact that with Thomas Cole he was the founder and leader of the so-called Hudson River school of landscape painting.

Born in Springfield, New Jersey, in 1796, Durand inherited from his father, a watchmaker and silversmith, a talent for handicraft, and this led to his being apprenticed in 1812 to Peter Maverick, an engraver. Here he spent five years learning the trade which he practiced with great success for nearly two decades. Aside from the purely commercial use of engraving, he used his talent in the more artistic pursuit of copying the painted works of many of his contemporaries, including the *Declaration of Independence* by Trumbull and the *Sleeping Ariadne* by Vanderlyn, together with many portraits by the artists of his day. Turning from the burin to pencil and palette, he tried his hand at portraiture with such success that commissions poured in upon him and greatly supplemented his already ample income.

After a brief visit abroad in 1840 Durand gave up portrait painting, as he had already abandoned engraving, to devote himself to landscape painting. American landscape painting of the early nineteenth century had a number of

in the BULLETIN of October, 1938. The other, a small *Self Portrait*,² has just been acquired.

It will be remembered that Eastman Johnson at the age of twenty-five was already an accomplished draftsman and had had a marked success with portrait drawings of notable people before he departed for Europe for study in 1849. Two years of severe academic training at Düsseldorf were followed by a fruitful sojourn at The Hague, where he came under the influence of Rembrandt and other Dutch masters. This period added a broadening touch to the range of his artistic vision and upon his return to America in 1855 was a factor in saving him from the trivialities of his period.

The exhibition of his picture known as *My Old Kentucky Home* won him election to the National Academy of Design in 1860, and in conformity with custom he was asked to present to that body a portrait of himself. That portrait formed one of the interesting items of the recent Brooklyn exhibition and was used as a frontispiece in the catalogue. It is here again reproduced.



(ABOVE)
SELF PORTRAIT
BY EASTMAN JOHNSON
AMERICAN, 1824-1906.

Gift of D. M. Ferry, Jr., 1940

(BELOW)
SELF PORTRAIT
BY EASTMAN JOHNSON
AMERICAN, 1824-1906.

National Academy of Design, New York



While the pose is quite different from that of the Detroit portrait, there is a marked resemblance of the features, indicating that they were made at the same period, and the smaller picture quite conceivably may have been a first study. Eastman Johnson, with his abundant wavy black hair and full beard, was a handsome young blade of thirty-five when this picture was painted. The three-quarter length standing figure, draped in a dark cape with velvet collar that falls gracefully about him, is a picturesque reminder of his student years in Europe. Painted in a low key and with a very sensitive envelopment of light and dark, it clearly shows his indebtedness to the Rembrandt influence. Upon its completion this conception may have seemed to the artist a little too showy, for in the final bust portrait of more conventional type deposited with the Academy the dress and pose is considerably modified and restrained. The charm of this small portrait is in its kinship in style and feeling to the genre of his earlier years which has had much to do with the revival of interest in this artist.

As we summarize his accomplishments as revealed in recent exhibitions, we find that his genre pictures depicting American life make a sturdy contribution that at times parallels that of Homer or Eakins. It is a matter of regret that his later years, devoted almost exclusively to his career as a successful and fashionable portrait painter, should have interrupted his delightful and significant interpretations of American life.

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN, BERKSHIRES BY ASHER B. DURAND

The importance of Asher B. Durand in American painting lies in the fact that with Thomas Cole he was the founder and leader of the so-called Hudson River school of landscape painting.

Born in Springfield, New Jersey, in 1796, Durand inherited from his father, a watchmaker and silversmith, a talent for handicraft, and this led to his being apprenticed in 1812 to Peter Maverick, an engraver. Here he spent five years learning the trade which he practiced with great success for nearly two decades. Aside from the purely commercial use of engraving, he used his talent in the more artistic pursuit of copying the painted works of many of his contemporaries, including the *Declaration of Independence* by Trumbull and the *Sleeping Ariadne* by Vanderlyn, together with many portraits by the artists of his day. Turning from the burin to pencil and palette, he tried his hand at portraiture with such success that commissions poured in upon him and greatly supplemented his already ample income.

After a brief visit abroad in 1840 Durand gave up portrait painting, as he had already abandoned engraving, to devote himself to landscape painting. American landscape painting of the early nineteenth century had a number of

devotees who made up in love of nature what they may have lacked in technical proficiency. With pride in the beauty and resources of their native land such men as Thomas Doughty, Thomas Cole, J. F. Kensett, William Sonntag and Asher B. Durand studied assiduously in the presence of nature, imparting to their topographical pictures such a warmth of feeling that today we recognize the importance of their contribution, for in these impassioned interpretations



MONUMENT MOUNTAIN, BERKSHIRES, BY ASHER B. DURAND
AMERICAN, 1796-1886.
Gift of D. M. Ferry, Jr., 1939

of the American scene they laid the foundation of landscape painting which has come down through the century as a distinctive phase of American art least touched by foreign influence.

Monument Mountain, Berkshires,³ recently added to our group of early American landscapes, admirably exemplifies and illustrates Durand's love of nature. His approach is in the spirit of the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, or like that of Constable. Working directly from the scene before him, he put in with great detail every tree and shrub, every rock and rivulet. Yet in spite of this minute delineation a singular expression of mood pervades this intimate study of a mountain stream with overhanging trees and distant peak.

Durand's life was free from struggle and vicissitudes. He had ample income from the practice of his profession and an amiable relationship with his patrons

and contemporaries. He was one of the charter members of the National Academy of Design, and the esteem in which he was held by his fellow artists is indicated by his election as president of the Academy in 1846 upon the retirement of Samuel F. B. Morse, a position he continued to hold until 1861.

CLYDE H. BURROUGHS

¹Accession number 40.56. Oil on canvas, H. 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches; W. 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Signed and dated at lower left corner *Homer* 1879. Collection of Mrs. Charles Savage Homer. Exhibited Winslow Homer Centenary Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1936, No. 18, *A Girl Picking Laurel*.

²Accession number 40.34. Oil on canvas, H. 18 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches; W. 12 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches. Signed at lower left E.J. J. I. H. Baur, *An American Genre Painter, Eastman Johnson, 1824-1906*, Brooklyn Museum, 1940. General catalogue of located works, No. 179a, where it is given a former erroneous identification as Charles Dickens.

³Accession number 39.6. Oil on canvas, H. 28 inches; W. 42 inches. Signed lower left corner *A. B. Durand*.

A Gift of Slovak Peasant Pottery and Costumes

THROUGH the generosity and vision of public-spirited citizens of Detroit of Slovak birth or descent, the Detroit Institute of Arts has recently received a gift of thirty-one pieces of colorfully decorated majolica — tin-enameled pottery — and four costumes from Slovakia. These gifts were made by the Art Museum Slovak Section of Detroit, organized in 1927 to procure for the Museum representative arts of Slovakia. The countries of Europe have long been collecting the folk arts, special museums often being organized for this purpose. It is fitting that the Museum of Detroit should collect not only the folk arts of America but also those of the European nationalities which are represented in the American nation.

Several styles and a great variety of decorative motives are to be distinguished in this group of carefully chosen examples of Slovak pottery, although not even specialists in this field are always able to place with certainty the locality of origin of the pieces. Many towns in the regions of Moravia and Slovakia produced pottery and the craftsmen not only absorbed numerous outside influences but also moved from place to place, making difficult localization and definition of styles.



DECORATED POTTERY PITCHERS
SLOVAK, NINETEENTH CENTURY

Gift of the Art Museum Slovak Section, 1940

Two types of clay were employed — a red-brown clay in wares with a thin glazing incised with designs permitting the earthy-red of the clay to show through, and a cream-grey clay used for the more typical ware completely covered with opaque white tin-enamel and painted with the typical floral patterns in which the peasant potters excelled and among which are sometimes introduced figured subjects — the tools of the farmer, scenes of farmers plowing with oxen, the soldier on horseback, or the representation of saints, such as the Virgin Mary, holding the Christ Child or the Dead Christ, or saints appropriate to the regions whence the pottery came, as St. John Nepomuck, patron saint of bridges and rivers, who suffered martyrdom in Prague, St. Stephen who was sanctioned by the Pope as King of Hungary, or St. Wendelin of Trier, patron of county people and herdsmen. The drawing of the designs is lively and fresh, although the floral patterns may be stylized and the figures far from realistic. Blue, yellow, green and violet are the predominating colors, with the occasional use of rose, brown or black.

The long native tradition of pottery making in the Slovak region has been subjected to the crossing currents of external influences from Germany and France on the west, through Bohemia, from Italy and Switzerland on the southwest, through Austria, Hungary and Moravia, and from Turkey and Persia on the southeast. The majolica technique (coarse pottery covered with opaque stanniferous enamel and painted with colorful designs, fired into the enamel, often without additional cover-glazes), adopted from Italy probably by way of Bohemia in the sixteenth century, was further developed in Moravia and Slovakia by the artists called Habaner, mostly German Anabaptists settled in Moravia, whose name was thus corrupted in Slovak speech and was attached to a type of pottery clearly influenced by Italian majolica and Delft ware, but probably having its more immediate origin in Switzerland. As time went on,

this ware, at its best in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, declined in quality but its influence became increasingly widespread. Numerous potteries flourished to supply the demand of the peasants for gaily decorated ware for daily use, for special occasions as guild meetings, weddings, or other events in the religious and social life of the people, or for display. A Slovak peasant woman took pride in the quality and quantity of her pottery. Often more than a hundred pitchers and plates or other pieces were hung from pegs or placed in racks on the walls of the rooms, adding color and rhythmic patterns to the interior and combining artistic decoration with utility.

FRANCIS W. ROBINSON

IT GIVES us great pleasure to announce the gift, by the Art Museum Slovak Section of Detroit, of four Slovak costumes. These have been chosen to demonstrate on their diverse parts — skirt, apron, bodice, blouse and headdress — the use of embroidery peculiar to districts and villages which is so well represented in the large study collection of specimens of embroidery and lace from Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, already presented to the Institute by the United Czechoslovak Organizations of Detroit (*BULLETIN*, Volume XIII, January 1932, pages 45-46).

A selection of the costumes is on exhibition in the Textile Gallery. From Trnava, Bratislavská, comes the most elaborate of them. A black apron embroidered in blue and silver partly covers the immense, tightly pleated skirt of beige silk patterned in brown and white, with a bodice of silver brocade. The blouse, embroidered in gold and silver thread, with collar and armlets of bobbin lace, matches the bonnet, and many yards of gaily patterned scarlet ribbon add a final touch of elegance.

Only slightly less striking to the eye is the costume from Cataj, another village in the same district. It also shows heavy relief embroidery in gold and silver thread and multi-colored silks on blouse and bonnet, but the skirt is of plain blue wool, better suited to pleating than the patterned silk of the Trnava costume, and contrasting pleasingly with the red bodice and white apron, both covered with red, green, yellow and purple embroidery.

A different type, possibly of greater appeal to a sophisticated taste, is represented by a costume from Cicmany, Trencianska: instead of silk skirt and brocade bodice, of metal thread on sleeves and bonnet, we have here the skirt and blouse of plain white cotton, exquisitely pleated and embroidered in gray and yellow thread. The apron is covered by bands of stylized birds and flowers alternating with bands of a simpler pattern which matches the embroidery on the sleeves and head veil. Coarse bobbin lace, outlined in grey, yellow and scarlet, is perfect as a finishing touch, and a small lace bonnet worn at the back of

the head looks as chic as any creation of Daché. A knitted belt of red wool is wound round and round the waist, and little slippers of embroidered white felt contrast amusingly with the black stockings.

The man's costume from Trnava, Bratislavská, is not complete. We have a beautifully embroidered shirt, gaily embroidered felt shoes and strange looking, horizontally pleated stockings, also of felt. These must have been welcome during the long cold winters in Slovakia, and might be equally so for winter sports here.

These costumes are colorful reminders of the folk art tradition of Europe and they may offer inspiration to the designers of America.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL

Museum Notes

PERRY T. RATHBONE, since 1937 Curator of Alger House, resigned on July 1 to become Director of the City Art Museum of St. Louis, where he assumed his duties in August. Mr. Rathbone joined the staff of the Detroit Institute of Arts in the fall of 1934 as a Museum Instructor and in 1936 was placed in charge of Alger House when it was being made ready to open to the public as a branch museum for Italian Renaissance art. Mr. Rathbone was an able interpreter of the works of art placed in his care and he arranged many noteworthy exhibitions in the galleries of Alger House.

THE SLOVAK POTTERY, recently given to the Museum, was presented to the public in a special exhibition during the summer. An adjoining gallery was devoted to an exhibition of Pueblo Indian water colors and Navajo silver, part of a donation made in 1937 by the eminent collector of North American Indian arts, Miss Amelia Elizabeth White of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The work of Detroit painters was shown both at the Art Institute and at Alger House.

MID-AUGUST saw the opening of a large exhibition of the works of Candido Portinari, the most celebrated painter of Brazil today. This was the first one-man exhibition of this artist's work in the United States. Following the close of the Detroit exhibition, the paintings, drawings and prints of Portinari are to be exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Arts Club of Chicago, the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, the City Art Museum of St. Louis, and elsewhere throughout the country.

THE DECLARATION of Czechoslovak Independence on October 28 will be commemorated at the Museum by an exhibition of the Czechoslovak donations of costumes, embroideries, laces, and pottery, opening October 20 in the Textile Gallery.

Calendar of Events For September and October

EXHIBITIONS

- August 16 through September 25: *Paintings by Candido Portinari of Brazil.*
- September 3 through September 29 (Alger House): *Italian Prints of the Renaissance.*
- September 18 through September 29: *Fifth Annual Exhibition of the After-School and Saturday Art Classes for Talented Children, Detroit Public Schools.*
- October 1 through October 15: *Exhibition of the Detroit Division of the Michigan Society of Architects and the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.*
- October 8 through October 31: *Hundred Print Salon of the Photographic Society of America.*
- October 18 through November 10: *Early Chinese Bronzes.*
- October 20 through October 31: *Peasant Arts of Czechoslovakia.*
- October 20 through November 17 (Alger House): *French Eighteenth Century Silver.*

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES

Given by the museum staff in cooperation with the Archaeological Society of Detroit and the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Tuesday evenings at 8:30 in the lecture hall of the Art Institute. Admission free.

- September 10: *An Approach to Art I: What to Look for in Painting*, by John D. Morse.
- September 17: *An Approach to Art II: What to Look for in Sculpture*, by John D. Morse.
- October 1: *Style Characteristics of Church Architecture*, by Aloys Frank Herman, President, Detroit Division, Michigan Society of Architects.
- October 8: *The Meaning of Architecture*, by Henry F. Stanton, Past President, Detroit Chapter, American Institute of Architects.
- October 15: *The Architect and Your House*, by Branson V. Gamber, President, Michigan Society of Architects.
- October 22: *History and Modern Architecture*, by Wirt C. Rowland, Director, Detroit Chapter, American Institute of Architects.
- October 29: *The Beginning of the Iron Technique*, by Harry Craig Richardson, Republic Steel Corporation, Cleveland.

SHORT COURSES BY THE CURATORS

Friday afternoons at 3:30 in the lecture hall. These afternoon meetings during the year will be devoted to short courses of related lectures for those who wish to gain a more intimate knowledge of the fields covered. The lectures will be illustrated with lantern slides and will afford a background for further enjoyment of the museum exhibits.

MASTER PAINTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. Eight lectures by Francis W. Robinson on the lives and times of representative artists of the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries in Italy. Admission charge for the course: \$2.00; for members of the Founders Society, \$1.00; single lectures \$.50 (members \$.25).

October 4: *Giotto and His Predecessors.*

October 11: *The Sienese Tradition from Duccio to Sassetta.*

October 18: *Masaccio and the Awakening in Florence.*

October 25: *Sentiment and Mysticism in Fra Angelico and Botticelli.*

November 1: *Leonardo da Vinci, the Universal Genius.*

November 8: *Raphael and Michelangelo—Poets and Painters.*

November 15: *The High Renaissance in Venice.*

November 22: *Baroque and Rococo: Caravaggio and Tiepolo.*

SHORT COURSES BY THE MUSEUM INSTRUCTORS

These courses, each consisting of eight lectures, are free to the public.

THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART. Eight lectures by Joyce Black Gnau on Thursday evenings at 8:30, beginning October 3.

ART, THE INDEX OF CIVILIZATION. A series of eight lectures by John D. Morse on Saturday afternoons at 3:00, beginning October 5.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURES

Given at 2:30 in the galleries, where chairs are provided.

September 15: *The Rivera Murals*, by Marion Leland Heath.

September 22: *John Carroll and Other American Mural Painters*, by John D. Morse.

September 29: *Chinese Pottery*, by Joyce Black Gnau.

October 6: *The Lost Civilization of the Andes*, by Marion Leland Heath.

October 13: *The Nineteenth Century Innovators*, by John D. Morse.

October 20: *Duncan Phyfe*, by Joyce Black Gnau.

October 27: *The Egyptian Mummy*, by Marion Leland Heath.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN EXTENSION COURSE

THE ART OF CHINA. Sixteen lectures by James Marshall Plumer, Lecturer on Far Eastern Art, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Michigan, in the study room of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Thursday evenings at 8:00, beginning October 3. Tuition: \$12.00; for graduate credit, \$16.00.

HOURS OF ADMISSION

The Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue at Kirby, is open free daily except Mondays and Christmas Day. Visiting hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 1 to 5 and 7 to 10; Wednesday, 1 to 5; Saturday, 9 to 5; Sunday, 2 to 6. The Russell A. Alger House, 32 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, a branch museum for Italian Renaissance art and temporary exhibitions, is open free daily except Mondays from 1 to 5; Sunday, 2 to 6. Telephones: Detroit Institute of Arts, COlumbia 0360; Alger House, TUxedo 2-3888; Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society, COlumbia 4274.